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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 USOSCE 000272

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SUBJECT: OSCE AND INCOMING CHAIR KAZAKHSTAN

Classified By: CDA:CFULLER

[¶1.](#) (C) SUMMARY: Although the Kazakhstanis reiterate on every occasion their commitment to the principles of the OSCE "acquis" and swear to protect the third dimension during their 2010 chairmanship of the OSCE, their negotiating style at the OSCE Ministerial Conference in Athens December 1-2 gave everyone a taste of what may come in 2010. To ensure achievement of their highest priorities, they were not averse to following hard-ball tactics, including bribery, verbal abuse, and refusal to take "no" for an answer. The musical theme of Kazakhstan,s proposal to host a high-level Summit in 2010 played throughout the preparations and final negotiations of the OSCE Ministerial in Athens December 1-2, but Uzbekistan played the final, sour note, ensuring the continuity of drama in the operetta in 2010. End Summary.

SAYING ALL THE RIGHT THINGS

[¶2.](#) (U) In OSCE meetings, the Kazakstanis continue to convey all the right messages about "unswervingly" upholding the principles of the OSCE "acquis" during their 2010 Chairmanship. At the Athens Ministerial, Secretary of State/Foreign Minister Saudabayev emphasized that Kazakhstan will guarantee equal efforts in all three OSCE dimensions; protect the third dimension (human rights, democracy, and the rule of law); support the work of ODIHR (Office of Democracy and International Human Rights); ensure that the annual HDIM meeting on the third dimension will continue as usual; and continue the positive work of the OSCE field offices.

BUT NEGOTIATING HARD ON KEY ISSUES

[¶3.](#) (C) Behind the scenes, however, the Kazakhstani delegation some times used hard-ball tactics to get their way on two issues of greatest importance to them: adoption of a ministerial decision to hold in Astana a high-level conference on tolerance and non discrimination and adoption of positive language to support their proposal to host a Summit in 2010.

[¶4.](#) (C) The Kazakhstanis want the conference to be a highlight for their 2010 Chairmanship in order to showcase Kazakhstan,s domestic achievements on religious tolerance. Laudable as these achievements are, the US and other delegations asserted that the issue of tolerance for Muslims must be balanced in the conference agenda by other issues, such as the fight against anti-semitism and racism, as well as other forms of intolerance. The Kazakhstanis worked hard to delete from the draft decision broader language reaffirming human rights principles and fundamental freedoms and mandating during the conference a "comprehensive review of the relevant OSCE commitments." At one point, to convince the US delegation to drop insistence on this language, they even offered to create a new position of Special Representative of the Chair on Gender Equality and to appoint a US citizen of our choice. USOSCE refused, and the decision eventually passed with most of the broader language supported by the US, the EU and Canada.

15. (C) Kazakhstan's highest priority at the ministerial, however, was to obtain positive language supporting their proposal to hold a Summit in 2010--despite the lack of a clear topic or concrete substance. Their passionate insistence on a Summit complicated negotiations during the run-up to, and during, the ministerial. The issue split the EU, with France and Italy leading efforts to "deliver" positive Summit language. They argued forcefully that a Summit would bring visibility and credibility back to the OSCE, which hasn't held a Summit since 1999--an argument which is supported by many countries, as well as the president of the Parliamentary Assembly, Joao Soares. Others, especially the UK, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, and Canada insisted along with the US that there must be substance before any agreement on a Summit. In the end, Kazakhstan and its supporters focused on the US as the locus of the opposition and sought every means of pressure to force agreement on some kind of endorsement of the Summit proposal.

16. (C) At the end of a final negotiating session which ran into 2 am on December 2, the last day of the ministerial, the participating states agreed to carefully-crafted US language in the final paragraph of the draft ministerial declaration on the OSCE Corfu Process which contained a series of caveats related to the summit. In four sentences, the language welcomed Kazakhstan in the 2010 Chair; noted "with interest" its proposal to hold an OSCE summit in 2010, but pointed out that such a high-level meeting would require adequate preparation in terms of substance and modalities; agreed that if the ministers determined that the OSCE agenda had advanced sufficiently to justify such a meeting, they

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would be willing to consider a summit; and tasked the Permanent Council to engage in exploratory consultations on the matter in the light of progress on the OSCE agenda. According to the Canadian ambassador, who witnessed the scene following the meeting, Kazakhstani OSCE Ambassador Abdrakmanov angrily berated the Greek CIO, shouting that her job had been to support the Kazakhstani proposal, that his Minister would be furious with this language, and that he intended to block consensus on the Corfu Process declaration when brought to the Prepcom later that morning.

17. (C) Instead, during a hastily-arranged bilateral with the US Head of Delegation just prior to the prepcom, Minister Saudabayev won approval for new language which remained true to the need to demonstrate progress on substance, but provided a more positive tone: "We welcome Kazakhstan in the 2010 OSCE Chairmanship, the first ever to be exercised by a Central Asian OSCE participating State. We note positively its proposal to hold an OSCE summit in 2010. We point out that such a high-level meeting would require adequate preparation in terms of substance and modalities. We task the Permanent Council to engage in exploratory consultations to determine the extent of progress on the OSCE agenda to inform our decision." Abdrakmanov "worked" the room extensively and pleaded with delegations to accept the unusual circumstance of language renegotiated by the two parties to replace that previously agreed to by all 56. The language was approved shortly afterwards by the Prepcom.

18. (C) Crossing the USOSCE Charge in the hall later that day, Saudabayev stopped, turned around, and came to grasp her hand, expressing his happiness with the language. Kazakhstani delight with the potential prospect of a Summit will serve USOSCE well as we enter what all expect to be a difficult year of the Kazakhstani Chairmanship of the OSCE.

STILL, TROUBLE LOOMS TO THE SOUTHWEST FOR KAZAKHSTAN

19. (C) There is still a coda to this little operetta. When the Corfu Declaration moved from the Prepcom to the Permanent Council for pro forma approval on the afternoon of December 2, Uzbekistan called for it to be reopened. Citing

new instructions--which he did not explain--the delegate stated that Uzbekistan could only agree to the declaration if the words "note positively" the Kazakhstani proposal to hold a Summit were changed back to "note with interest"--the original US language. Abdrakmanov quickly agreed to the change and the declaration was reaccepted, leaving all to wonder why Uzbekistan would intervene so late in the process and in such a way as to undermine Kazakhstan,s efforts for positive language. Delegations have been so focused on concern about what Kazakhstan might do as chair that they have not paid much attention to the underlying political currents among the five Central Asian countries--which could also impact on Kazakhstan,s chairmanship as well. We may get greater insight this week. The Uzbek Charge d,Affaires has already requested to meet with the US CDA this week. It should be an interesting year in 2010.

#### COMMENT

¶10. (C) Despite the hard-ball tactics, the Kazakhstanis did not get all they wanted. They achieved their core objective of a positive statement about the summit. But they also had to live with language that holds their feet to the fire on the institution,s "acquis." They had to swallow a watered-down version of the Ministerial declaration language, and they weren,t able to push their more limited version of tolerance on us.

FULLER